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of this year's*

# BUILDING DESIGN AWARDS



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Benjamin Moore



# 2017 BERMUDA BUILDING & INTERIOR DESIGN AWARDS

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From a masterfully designed home in Tucker's Town to an energizing office space in the heart of Hamilton, our 24th annual awards features stunning new buildings and magnificent interiors.

#### THANKS GO TO OUR JUDGES:

Malcolm Southerland, senior director of real estate, Rosewood Tucker's Point  
Janice Burke, owner, eye4design Interior Decorating  
Lynn Hassell, co-owner, HASCO Construction  
James Tucker, registered architect/goat farmer  
Ari Ming, architect, Bermuda Government

WRITTEN BY LAURA BELL



Building & Interior Design Awards  
**RESIDENTIAL BUILDING  
DESIGN WINNER**

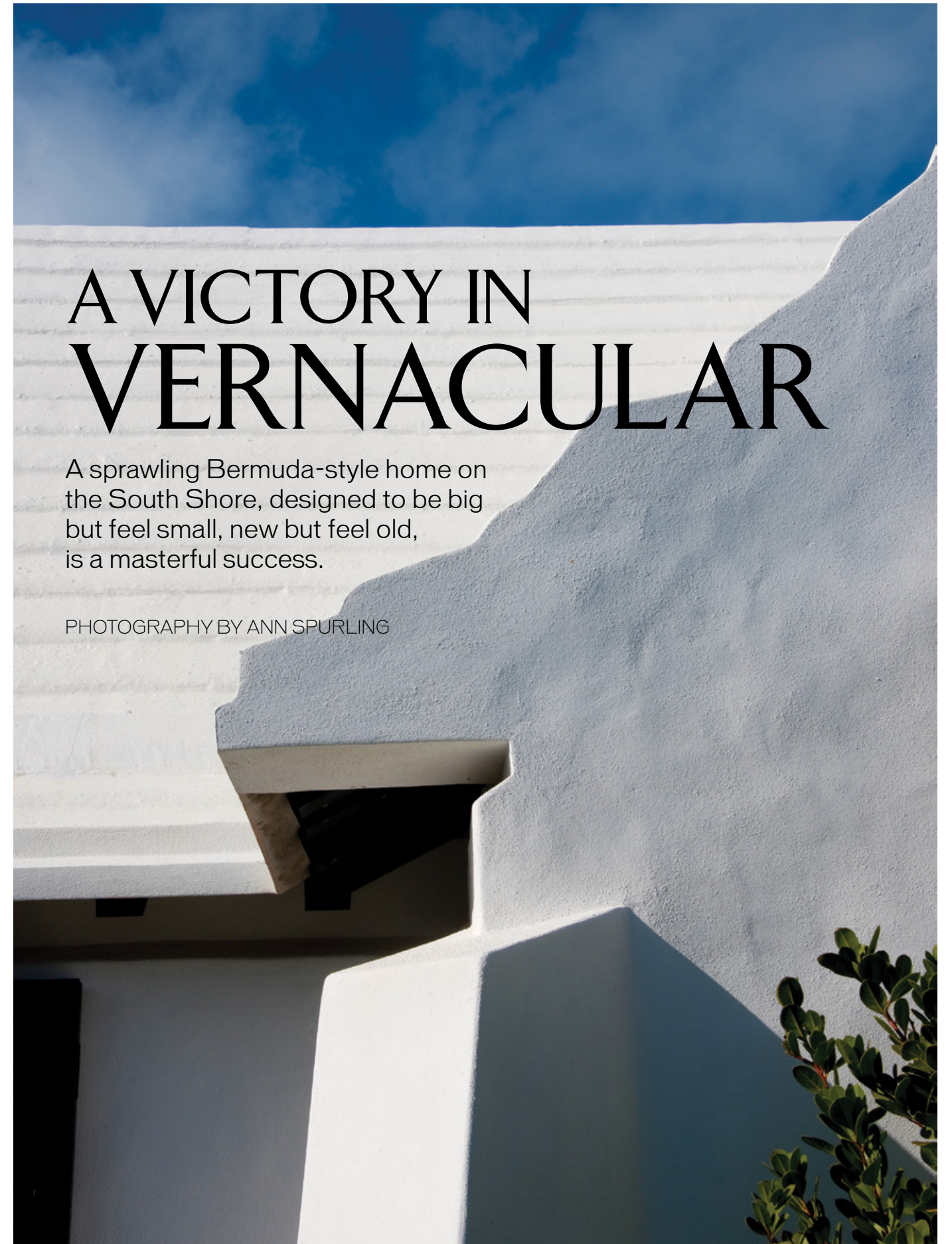
**SEAROSE**  
by cTx Design Group



# A VICTORY IN VERNACULAR

A sprawling Bermuda-style home on the South Shore, designed to be big but feel small, new but feel old, is a masterful success.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANN SPURLING







Left: The full expanse of Searose can only be seen from the south facing lawn.  
 Below, left: Searose is designed around a central tiled courtyard.  
 Above: A smaller garden courtyard features an artistic cedar gate.  
 Below: A secret room can only be accessed if you know which book opens the hidden door.

A masterpiece” is how one judge described Searose—a creative and extraordinarily well-considered six-bedroom, six-and-a-half-bathroom family home in Tucker’s Town designed by cTx Design Group. Situated on a spectacular two-acre site overlooking south shore, this 7,200-square-foot house almost miraculously feels far more like a cosy, 100-year-old Bermuda cottage than a stark brand new construction—which was exactly the owner’s intention.

“The mandate for the design was to provide a feeling of history and classic Bermudian cottage design—soft and worn-out/freshened-up,” said the owner, a mother of five boys and grandmother to several grandchildren. “[We wanted it to look like] an old Bermudian cottage that we found abandoned and fixed up, spliced with a touch of modern (in the kitchen), but really just simple and plain, and then, most importantly, whimsy dotted all around.”

Designed around a central courtyard, the home slowly reveals itself as visitors meander from one carefully laid out room to the next. With such a spectacular view to work with, a natural inclination would be to build a house with access to it from every room, but Jacob Hocking at cTx would have to go against that instinct and instead be far more creative with his design.

“The clients wanted to resist the temptation to wow visitors with the spectacular view immediately upon entering the house and chose to slowly reveal the overland and ocean views as visitors walk around the courtyard hallways,” said Hocking. “Experiencing the house, and the site for that matter, is more of a journey—different areas and viewpoints expose themselves as you walk around the property.”



The organising element of the courtyard added to the success of the project, stated the judges. “It is a meandering home yet it has such a good rhythm to it,” said one judge, while another commented on how the courtyard “worked so well to allow light into the interiors”. “The attention to detail is incredible,” cited another judge.

To create a sense of history within a new construction, without it appearing as if it was created by Disney-like builders, took an exceptional amount of consideration from the initial design concepts to the final plastering.

“We approached the design of the house as if it had evolved over

time,” explained Hocking. “We designed the original cottage, then added bedrooms, etc., much as if the home had evolved naturally. We covered larger rooms with steep gabled roofs and then connected them with lower, flatter roofs so that you could see between the structures and they read as individual forms, not one large mass. We also moved away from a traditional approach in architecture where a house has a front, a back and two sides to try and create a house with four fronts. This means the building is more square than rectangular which masks the true mass of a large house well.”

In the construction phase, Hocking joked that they had the masons mixing the concrete and the labourers doing the plastering with broken tools to avoid the natural desire to create the perfect lines of a

new house. “We took painstaking steps to grind the roofs and distress the plastering so that it had the look of a house that had been there for some time,” said Hocking. “We softened the weathers on the roof by hand, built false sags and repaired nonexistent cracks to age the roof. On the plastering, we restricted the tools that the masons could use so that corners were rounded, edges were softer and walls were straight, but not flat. This was all done whilst being careful that windows, doors, baseboards and cabinets would all fit without large gaps.”

Truthfully, Hocking says the team at SJ Construction deserves significant praise for going to the lengths that they did to build such an impressive house.

“Making the house look old required a craftsman approach by the contractor. We practised how to do this without making it look like Disney world and ultimately ended up building the critical elements in exactly the same manner and with the same tools as they would have been built originally.”

Other carefully considered details in the design included using wooden joists over the concrete slabs so that the unfinished oak floors would be “hollow and creak as you walk over them. This method gave not only authentic-feeling wooden floors but the structural strength and longevity of the concrete slabs,” said Hocking.

The owners were determined to have a single-floor home, but the designer insisted some elevation was needed. “Jacob believed the house needed a little lift in the overall composition, but we were stuck on having only one floor,” said the owner. “He was absolutely right, and it contributes a great deal to the whole architectural design. At one point I wanted a spiral staircase going down from the crow’s nest





Right: A expansive porch enjoys South Shore views and overlooks the pool. Below: The landscape design was equally well considered. Meandering pathways lead to lovely courtyards for the whole family to enjoy exploring.

into the interior courtyard, but we opted for a tiny balcony instead.”

The crow’s nest was built a half-storey higher than the main house and was designed to be a secret getaway for the grandchildren. “My husband and I raised five boys and our youngest always wanted a secret room behind a panel or bookcase,” said the owner, who was passionate about adding a sense of whimsy in the design. “When the architect suggested a hidden door within a bookcase, we jumped on it, and the idea lent itself to lead to the crow’s nest.”

Another secret hideaway was created above the garage. Designed to nestle into the hillside, it was conceived as stables with a hay loft, said Hocking. “The loft is an additional guest suite with private garden seating areas that is accessed through a vegetation tunnel. It feels secret and private,” he added.

Outside, the concept of the landscape



design was equally well-considered to give the home an authentic sense of history as well as an enjoyable environment for the family to explore and experience. “Landscaping was critical to this project in order to make the house look like it had been there for a long time,” said Hocking. “Bob Duffy worked with us tirelessly to select plants that would grow in the exposed area yet achieve the country garden look that [the owners] desired. The meandering pathways, secret rock-cut stairs, lookout seating areas and vegetation tunnels all come together to make walking around the site a fun experience for [the owners] and their grandchildren.”

Now, after three years from initial concepts to completion, the designer says that Searose is one of his favourite homes of those the company has created to date and had difficulty deciding which part of the design was his favourite. “I like it all,” he said. “It is certainly one of my favourite homes that we have designed. It feels lived in and like it has been there for generations. I like that it looks smaller than it is and fits into the site rather than sits on top of it. I am happy that it reveals itself slowly to you and is a humble addition to the site.”

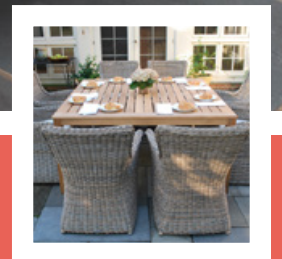
As with all projects of this scale, challenges are to be expected. But Hocking’s main one was actually within himself. “The biggest challenge was accepting that some of the client’s ideas were better than my own,” he stated, humbly. “[The owners] would often propose things that I was initially uncomfortable with but we would develop the ideas together and

General Contractor	SJ Construction
Carpenter	SJ Carpentry
Electrician	First Class Electrical
Plumber	Kings Plumbing
Window, Shutters & Exterior Doors	Island Glass
Paint	Rowe Spurling
AC	Air Pro
Concrete Countertops & Fireplace Surround	Concrete Works
Kohler Exterior Showers Plumbing	BAC
Landscaping	Bermuda Landscape Consultants
Glass Pool Tile Supply	Eminence
Pool Tile Installation	Eminence
Pool Equipment	Island Trading
Roof Profile	Bermuda Paint

end up with a final product that exceeded both of our expectations. This project has changed the way that I approach client ideas in our current designs.

“As with all projects, this house had its ups and downs,” Hocking continued. “Both [of the owners] remained steadfast in their desire to design a Bermudian home in Bermuda, not a summer house, and working with clients who care so much about what we are creating is always fun. Our whole design team has become friends with them as a result of this project. This is testament to the patience, hard work and understanding that we all shared as a group in executing this design.”

And that highly successful execution of this complex and creatively designed masterpiece of a house is exactly what earned cTx Design Group this award.



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**COMMERCIAL BUILDING  
DESIGN WINNER**

**BELVEDERE RESIDENCES**  
by Botelho Wood Architects



# CITY SLICKER

A state-of-the-art, six storey residential building with lifestyle amenities is Pembroke's newest in chic city living.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANN SPURLING





Left: The entrance of Belvedere Residences is accessible for all. Above: The modern interior of one of the units.



City living has risen to state-of-the-art, new heights in the recently constructed Belvedere Residences situated on Pitts Bay Road right next to the iconic Bacardi International building. Designed by Botelho Wood Architects for West Hamilton Holdings Limited, the building is the first of three planned for the area.

“The owner, recognising that Bermuda’s business hub is quickly being re-centered on this area of Pitts Bay Road, requested us to design a state-of-the-art, mixed-use building that would offer residential options and lifestyle amenities to the many people working in this neighbourhood,” said architect Michael Strohecker. “In keeping with this mandate, the building consists of a gym and fitness centre at ground floor level and basement, along with executive apartments above, offering all the convenience of city living.”

With the construction site mere feet from the Bacardi building, Strohecker says it was only natural to be inspired by them for the over-

all exterior design of Belvedere. “We drew design inspiration from the neighbouring Bacardi International headquarters building and tried to be a respectful neighbour—including such design elements as the broad horizontal line and large areas of glazing,” he said.

The six-storey, 32,000-square-foot building features nine apartments with generously sized lobbies on each floor and a CourtHouse Squash and Wellness facility on the main floor. Opened last October, the gym consists of 5,900 square feet and includes a squash court, spinning room, fitness centre and locker rooms.

Seven of the apartments are 1,500 square feet each while the other two are 750 square feet and all are contemporary in design. “A Botelho Wood team consisting of myself, Germano Botelho, Lisamarie Masters and Krystal Rodrigues designed the building’s common spaces and apartment and penthouse office interiors,” explained Strohecker. “We utilised large areas of floor to ceiling glass in the apartments to flood natural light to the apartments and take advantage of the surrounding views of the Great Sound.”

With an aim to maximise those views and keep the units feeling “bright and open,” the team were deliberate in their design of the apartment space, said Strohecker. “We used an open plan concept, floor-to-ceiling windows and generous corner balconies, strategically placed to provide privacy and take advantage of views. We worked closely with the structural engineers at Entech to open up the corners of the building, eliminating obtrusive corner columns.

“One of our favourite design features of the building is the apartment balconies and how we were able to keep the corners column free,” he continued. “This allows an uninterrupted view from the interior and gives the building a lighter feeling.”

Naturally, a project of this size will always encounter some challenges. However, through careful engineering the team still managed to create a fully accessible building on the sloping site. A change of mind on the interior design also challenged the architects. “Roughly halfway through construction, the design and layout of the penthouse was changed,” Strohecker said. “This required some significant changes but



Above: Floor to ceiling glass walls flood the contemporary interiors. Left: The fitness centre features a squash court, spinning room, fitness centre and locker rooms.

General Contractor	BCM McAlpine Ltd.
MEP Engineer / Contractor	BESCO Ltd.
Structural Engineer	Entech Ltd.
Interior Design	Botelho Wood Architects
Landscape Contractor	Horsfield Landscaping
Roofing	Gray & Co. Ltd
Carpet & Wood Flooring	Stafford Flooring
Tile Flooring	Eminence
Exterior Finish System / Formwork Contractor	Kaissa Ltd.
Windows / Glass	Island Glass
Painting Contractor	Mathias Pro Contracting
Appliances	Bermuda Supply
Elevator	Bermuda Elevator Systems Ltd.
Drywall Contractor	LG Drywall
Signage	Bermuda Blueprinting
Paving	Sousa’s Landscaping

The interiors were designed to maximize the Great Sound views.



working with the contractors we were able to make the change with minimal impact to the overall schedule.”

Construction area was also limited due to an area zoned woodland reserve on the northern part of the site, but the firm took this as an opportunity. “As part of the approval process we worked with the Department of Conservation Services to develop a conservation management plan for this area which included removing the invasive species plants and trees and replanting the area with native species,” said Strohecker. Now the tenants have a beautiful, private nature reserve view to compliment the Great Sound views on the other side of their unit.

This careful consideration was not missed by our judges who commented that the “interiors relate to the exteriors extremely well,” and how the entire project was “very well-detailed and extremely well-finished.” They also called

the project a very successful and “bold statement.”

Based on the immediate success of this project (all nine units have already been rented or sold), the team is currently working on the design drawings for the next “sister” residential building. A future office building along Pitts Bay Road is also in the cards said Strohecker, who says it will be “one that can compete with Waterloo House.”

Humbly, the architect was quick to commend all the contractors and workers that were ultimately responsible for the success of Belvedere Residences. “The building’s success would not have been possible without the hard work of BCM McAlpine Ltd., the general contractors, along with BESCO, the MEP contractor, and the many other subcontractors,” he said. “Additionally Tim Berry of Atlantic Building Consultants was the quantity surveyor and integral in keeping the

project on time and schedule. It was great to see over 200 local construction workers busy for two years and to those guys we would like to say, thank you!”

Strohecker also complimented the team of architects, technologists and consultants at Botelho Wood for the “well thought out and designed building,” along with the planning department who approved a not-so-traditional building. Lastly, he thanked his client, the West Hamilton Board, who had the “vision and confidence” to allow them to design this landmark building.

“The feedback from the client and tenants has been very positive and we look forward to the same results for the next buildings on the site,” concluded Strohecker.






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Building & Interior Design Awards

**RESIDENTIAL BUILDING  
DESIGN RUNNER-UP**

**SALTBOX**

by Botelho Wood Architects

## SMALL SPACE, BIG STYLE

A couple downsize to a home that feels comfortable  
and unrestrained despite the small footprint.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANN SPURLING

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While the young are often preoccupied with a need for increase in their life, a desire to distill the essence of what is truly important while clearing away unnecessary clutter often comes with maturity. Such is the case with Saltbox—a relatively small, two-bedroom home created for a couple with adult children who split their time between Bermuda, London and North America and wanted a home here that had all the amenities of a large house but better fit their jet-setting lifestyle. So they turned to Botelho Wood Architects to turn a 2,900-square-foot site next to their main house into their new dream home.

Downsizing with clarity of purpose and exceptional design is the mark of an award-worthy architectural design—and Botelho Wood hit the mark with Saltbox. “The building certainly rose to the challenge of the tight site restraints,” remarked one judge, while others commented on the “exceptional flow of space” and “successful blend of contemporary style with colonial touches.”



The name Saltbox derives from a New England style of house the owners liked and the architects loosely based their design on. A saltbox house derives its name from the resemblance to a wooden-lidded box in which salt was once kept. It usually features a long, pitched roof with one storey in the back and two storeys in the front with the asymmetry of the unequal sides being the most distinctive feature.

Senior architectural technologist Mark Danforth described the design as “a blend of traditional Bermuda architecture with clean, simple, contemporary design that is loosely based on the saltbox style. It’s a small home with all the amenities of a large home.”

To fit so much into such a small footprint—1,200 square feet to be exact—the firm had to carefully consider each room to maximise the space for their client. As such, a simple open-plan living concept on the main floor was designed in conjunction with a covered veranda on the

Top: Perfect for entertaining, the backyard features an extended porch with a built in fireplace. Above, right: The open plan living area makes the space seem large. Left: The combined kitchen and dining area

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The master suite on the third floor is spacious and inviting.

exterior to allow for an extended entertaining space. Designing the room as one open space featuring a clean-lined kitchen, dining area and living space the room feels luxuriously spacious. This feat was largely successful by burying the basement—with rooms for storage and services—and simple entrance foyer into the rock-cut below allowing the architect to free up the overall living space above while working within the tight site restraints. “The client has a home in central London so could appreciate a more compact living arrangement,” said Danforth.

Directly off the main living area, the backyard was designed to be intimate and perfect for entertaining. An existing rock-cut was readjusted by the landscape designers to “provide a strong focal point for planting and a general softening of the space,” according to Danforth. A Jacuzzi tub hidden away on the eastern side of the house and an outdoor fireplace under the covered veranda finish-off the space.

As for the more private areas of the house, up the glass-railing stairs on the top floor are a master bedroom suite and en suite guest room, both spacious and airy without excess. The total floor area of the three-storey house comes to 2,900 square feet and took two years to design and build.

Situated directly on the road in Point Shares, there were considerable challenges faced in the building process. “[Due to the] tight site, there was no space for working, parking, deliveries, storage of materials, etc.,” explained Danforth. “We had to manage the project very well by coordinating and scheduling works between suppliers, contractors and installers in a systematic and logical manner.”

According to Danforth, it is the overall feeling of the home that he is most proud of. “Despite the small footprint that houses two en suite bedrooms, a master walk-in closet, an entry area, a study, two exterior verandahs, a drive-in garage, and a pump and mud room, the home feels comfortable and unrestrained,” he said. “Careful design creates naturally bright and airy spaces, allows the eye to wander and makes the spaces feel large.”

While the thought of downsizing can be

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daunting, the perfect design can be life changing—despite the challenges. The key is finding the right partner to put all the pieces together,

exactly what was accomplished in this award-worthy project. As one judge simply stated, “They found a place for everything.”



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The staircase features glass railings and a large window which floods the space with light.

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Mechanical Contractor / HVAC	Air Care
Electrical Contractor	Niches Electrical
Engineer	Entech Ltd
Landscape Contractor	Brown and Company Ltd
Audio Visual	Custom Acoustics
Plumbing Supplier	BAC
Plumbing Installer	Pitts Plumbing
Heat Pump / Water Heater	BE Solar
Fireplace Installer	Kings Plumbing & Mechanical
Flooring Supplier(s)	Pembroke Tile & Stone Ltd
Flooring Installer(s)	K Tile
Flooring Installer(s)	Eminence Tile & Stone
Painting	Impressionz Painting & Maintenance
Millwork	Convoy Custom Interiors Inc
Interior Doors	E&G Craftshop
Glass Enclosures and Railings	Alumiglas
Countertop Supplier / Installer	Innovative Surfaces Ltd
Product Suppliers	Joshua Bate Trading Bermuda Ltd
Windows/Doors	Tischler Windows and Doors
Mirror Supplier / Installer	Clear Choice Doors, Windows and Glass Ltd
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# WITH CHARACTER, COMFORT & CHIC

While still embracing the historic feel, a dated two-bedroom home is transformed.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANN SPURLING

Building & Interior Design Awards

**RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR DESIGN WINNER**

**TANGLEWOOD**

by cTx Design Group







Left: The kitchen features a built in dining island. Above: The stunning original crown moldings were highlighted using charcoal grey paint on the ceilings and walls. Below: The wife's office/guest room features a marble desktop.

The perfect marriage of classic and contemporary style within a stunning space masterfully reconfigured for modern living has won cTx Design Group the overall win for Residential Interior Design in this year's awards.

The clients were looking to purchase a new home and invited cTx to view this beautiful, but certainly dated, second-storey unit at Tanglewood to discuss a face-lift. "We agreed that the house had all the bones to be a stunning home, but just needed a bit of work to bring out the beauty," said interior designer Lauren Grayston. The owners—a husband and wife who hail from the U.K. but have lived in Bermuda for the past 20 years—were looking for "a contemporary new space that respected the grandeur and history of the original house," said Grayston.

With an incredible Great Sound view, luxuriously high ceilings and beautiful crown mouldings to work with, the designer set her sights on maximising the inherent natural beauty of the 2,000-square-foot space while making the home livable for the new owners. "[The unit] was very traditionally decorated with dark wood cabinetry and travertine tiles in the bathrooms and kitchen," explained Grayston. "The main floors were carpeted in yellow carpet and the walls were yellow with off-white moldings. The kitchen was located in the southeast corner of the house, separated from the main living area. The living room, which has stunning views of the Great Sound, was closed off by two walls that ran down the centre of the unit. Overall it felt a bit dark and in need of an update."

Interior renovations included opening up the walls that ran down the centre of the house in order to access the view from the entire main living space; moving the kitchen to the entrance of the unit; creating a new combined dining area within the kitchen; adding a new entry door in the kitchen; creating a new bathroom and bedroom (doubling as the husband's study) where the old kitchen was; and adding a new walk-in closet, complete with washer and dryer, in the master suite. Throughout the entire unit, the flooring was replaced, bathrooms were reconfigured with all new fixtures, tile and lighting, and all new electrical window



and door blinds were installed. Elements retained included the ceilings, crown moldings, architraves, window moldings and sills, interior doors and two Waterford crystal chandeliers.

Striking the balance between cosy and sleek, the new, modern kitchen is a highlight of the main central living space. Grayston describes it as such: "The kitchen is contemporary with high-gloss white and matt charcoal grey flat paneled custom cabinetry with integrated appliances and charcoal grey walls with white moldings that pop. The custom-made reclaimed dining island top and wood panels over the range

cabinetry provide warmth. The paneling of the appliances, oversized brass hanging light, and three-inch thick rustic tabletop make the space feel cosy yet sleek."

While the overall colour palette was soft greys and white throughout, each room in the house has its own character, reflective of the personalities of the owners: "The wife is very energetic and creative and the husband is easy-going and calm. Both have great taste," said Grayston, who created a unique guest room/office for each of them. "The wife's suite is contemporary urban with a dash of glam—crystal sconces and chandeliers with graffiti walls and high-gloss cabinetry and thick statuario marble desktop," explained the designer, "while the husband's suite is earthy and relaxed with the natural wood cabinetry and floor-to-ceiling wood-tiled walk-in shower."

In the main living area, Grayston managed to combine the tastes of both owners to create a comfortable yet chic entertaining space with pops of colour, while the master bedroom was finished in ethereal shades of soft greys and whites with a spectacular chandelier to add a touch of sparkle in the otherwise serene room.

One judge described it as "one of the nicest residential interiors I have ever seen," while another commented on the "subtle use of colour which gives the space an elegant and intense quality." Yet another judge described the kitchen as the "perfect blend of metal, marble and wood."

The challenges that had to be overcome in the project—and the successful ways that cTx handled them—were also well noted by the judges.

"This is a very old building that came with all the quirks of one—out-of-square walls, floors very out of level and, of course, building on a second storey always makes delivery of thousand-pound pallets of tile and thick slabs of marble countertops a nail-biting experience to watch!" said Grayston. "The Heart and Soul crew did an amazing job re-plastering walls to make them perfect and Souza's did a meticulous job of levelling the floors and installing the new oak flooring. The moving of everything onto site was done by Heart and Soul by telehandler—no easy feat as each item had to be picked up and gently set down two storeys up before being carried across the



The master bathroom is a calm oasis for the busy couple.



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She said, he said! The top photo features a vibrant graphic wall art inside the wife's guest bathroom. Below is the husband's earthy office/guest room.



exterior patio into the house.”

Other challenges included the finishing and installation of the custom dining island top by SJ Carpentry. “The top, which was made out of salvaged beams that had been sitting outside for months, was a real challenge to finish perfectly but I think the end result is exactly what we wanted,” said Grayston. The designer also wanted to mention the great work done by Souza’s Carpets and Flooring: “The laying of the new wood floors was a real challenge and they did a fabulous job of the preparation and installation.”

“We had a very clear vision to create a contemporary home whilst still embracing the historic feel of the building—I’d like to think we achieved this,” said the owners, who are thrilled with the outcome. “cTx completely understood the brief, resulting in both a successful and enjoyable collaboration. Thanks go out to the entire team—especially Lauren and Jacob!”

General Contractor	Heart & Soul
Flooring Supply & Installation	Souza’s Carpets and Flooring
Electrician	In and Out
Kitchen Cabinetry Installation & Dining Island top	SJ Carpentry
Kitchen Cabinetry	Christiana Cabinetry
Tile, Membrane, Setting Materials, Underfloor Heating	Pembroke Tile & Stone
Shower Enclosures, Glass Backsplash, Glass Closet Doors	Clear Choice
Bathroom Plumbing Fixtures	Hansgrohe
Vanities	Madeli Restoration Hardware
Paint	Rowe Spurling Paint
AC	Air Pro
Marble Countertops	Aptech
Quartz Countertops	Eminence
Roller Blinds	Sash & Trim
Appliances	Bermuda Supply
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Building & Interior Design Awards

**COMMERCIAL INTERIOR  
DESIGN WINNER**

**SUN LIFE FINANCIAL**

by Linberg & Simmons

One are the days of employees slogging away from nine to five in a dark cubicle while the C-suite work in closed-off offices day in and day out. The new corporate culture has evolved and open plan working environments have become the new norm as companies embrace the importance of creating a better environment for their staff. In designing their headquarters for their international high-net-worth business in Washington Properties, Sun Life Financial took this enhanced corporate mind-set to the next level.

“Sun Life wanted to create a more modern and agile working environment that would enhance the foundational workplace and emotional health and well-being of their employees,” explained interior designer Dawn Dunstan of Linberg & Simmons. “They wanted to provide a brighter, high energy work environment and offer flexibility and choice in how their employees could work. Sun Life believes that when people are happier they are more productive, and it’s a big part of why the company invested in this new office space.”

“They realise that not everyone works in the same way. While some people prefer quiet, others prefer a more social environment. So we have spaces that offer either option and Sun Life employees can take advantage of both throughout the day, as they see fit.”

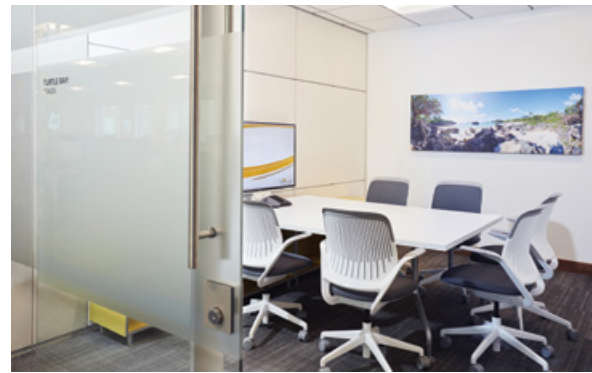
With 16,000 square feet designed to house their 60 current employees—and space for growth—no detail was seemingly overlooked. The main office space features an open plan desk area with low partitions for ease of

# THE NEW WORK LIFE AT SUN LIFE

Sun Life Financial’s new brighter, high energy offices in Bermuda reflect their belief that when people are happier they are more productive.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANTOINE HUNT





Left: Fully connected breakout stations are available for employees when they need to get away from their desks and when guests need a temporary station. Above: A small meeting room is fully equipped with audiovisual needs. Below: The boardroom is both high-tech and beautifully designed with residential touches.

communication and there is a small telephone room for when private calls are necessary. Collaborative lounge spaces were created for casual meetings or brainstorming sessions while small focus meeting rooms offer alternative work spaces for up to four staff members for those who prefer to work in a quieter environment. A spacious training room was designed to accommodate all of the staff in a town hall format or reconfigured with mobile tables for training sessions. And hotel desks are spread throughout the office for visitors or staff who need to relocate for short periods to work with colleagues in teams or on specific projects, explained Dunstan. Of course, all the state-of-the-art digital connectivity necessary for a modern office with global communication needs has also been included.

And because the company expects to grow, the design incorporates demountable wall systems from DIRTT with prewired electrical systems that can easily be moved around and reconfigured into a new location with ease. Along with less waste and expense down the line, the “green” benefits of using these wall systems also include the fact that their insulation features recycled blue jean and old tyres. Other energy-saving features include LED lighting throughout, occupancy sensors in the offices spaces and small meeting rooms, and reused and reupholstered existing task and lounge seating. Plus, “all of their old furniture was donated to various charities and organisations including The Family Learning Centre, Citizens Uprooting Racism in Bermuda, Bermuda College, TNT Tatem Middle School and Atlantic Vision Care,” said Dunstan. “By donating the furniture, Sun Life diverted unnecessary waste being dumped into landfill.”

“Sun Life as a company is very strongly family-orientated,” continued Dunstan. “Their employees are a family and their families are encouraged to be part of the corporate culture.” Therefore creating comfortable, yet functional, lounge spaces was as important to Sun Life as the design of the office areas. The café features a kitchenette, a buffet counter and serving area for employee functions, a TV and a large dining area with both booth seating as well as tables and chairs that can be easily reconfigured to suit the use of the space. “The café space was not only designed to meet the staff’s need for a lunchtime dining space



but to also accommodate larger internal social gatherings and double as a second more casual training room,” said Dunstan. And, to make the space a dynamic place to eat and socialise, the designer included a large graphic wall installation along one wall and a fun “beach blanket-like” carpet under the serving table to add interest.

Working along with Sun Life’s global branding team, Dunstan included several large graphic wall installations. Printed on wall canvas by Signworx and installed by Abbott Contracting, they include a 40-foot-long by 8-foot-high mural featuring images of Bermuda with Sun Life branding. According to Dunstan, other pieces include canvases and prints with images selected to represent Sun Life Financial International’s brand identity and display key phrases such as “We are strong, innovative & adaptive” and “Wealth for generations.”

Local art was also included and photographer Antoine Hunt was contracted to provide the majority of the various photos of Bermuda scenery, nature and architecture displayed throughout the open office area. “Staff were asked to name each of the focus and meeting rooms with a Bermuda theme,” said Dunstan. “The photo or artwork in each room was then selected to represent the theme for that room. For example, the Horseshoe meeting room has a panoramic photo of Horse-

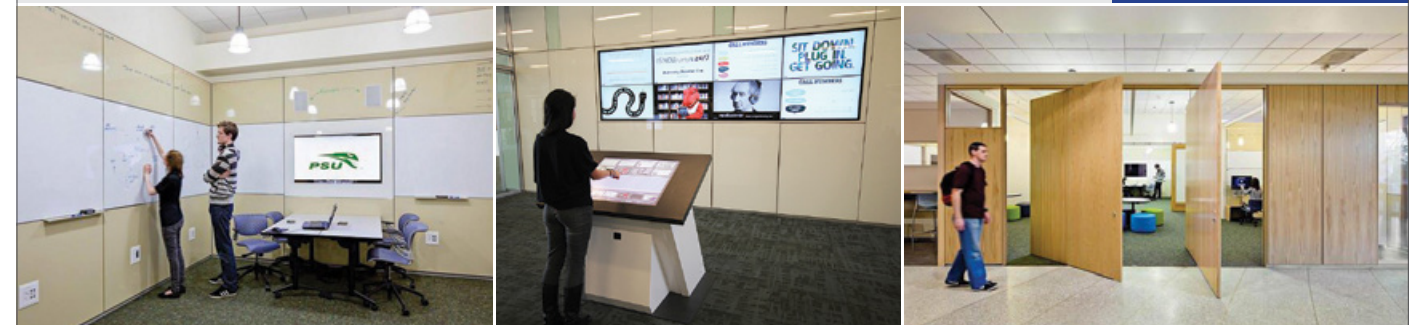
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Above and below: **The kitchen has been designed for special corporate functions and as a casual place for staff members to enjoy their lunch hour.**



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Lighting	BUE
DIRTT Wall	COE, installed by EPS
Vinyl Floor Supplier	COE
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Data/IT Installation	CCS
Reupholstery Work	Trott Drapery
Furniture	AF Smith, Diversified Services and COE

shoe Bay and the Bermudiana focus meeting room has three contemporary photos of the Bermudiana flower. Most of these photos are printed on canvas wrapped frames.”

Also included in the overall design, were a number of residential elements to give the feel of a living room or casual gathering space to encourage open communication, explained the designer. “We included fun feature lights in the staff collaborative areas and focus rooms that are more residential in feel. They are a bit whimsical and give pops of colour. We wanted to make these areas feel more relaxed and comfortable.”

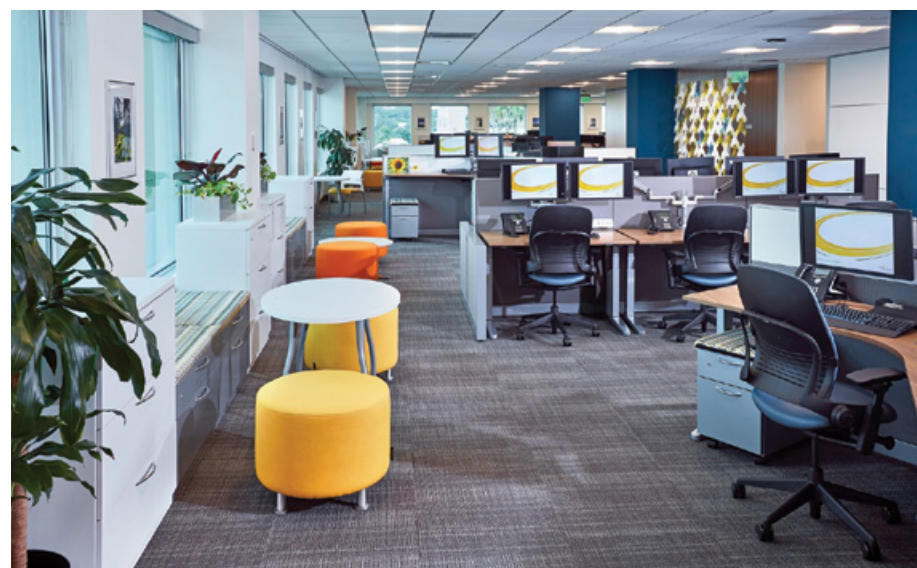
In addition, Dunstan also incorporated a relaxation room—a private room for staff to use when they need a quiet space for their well-being. It also doubles as a mothers’ room to be used by new mothers when they return to work and includes a sink, fridge and microwave along with a lounge chair and ottoman.

“Due to the private nature of this room, this is one of the few areas in the office where there is no window or natural light,” said Dunstan. “But we wanted to make people feel comfortable in there and give them some feeling of relaxation and outdoors when they are using the room. We used a photograph by Antoine Hunt of a Bermuda beach scene and Signworx printed it on canvas to be the full size one of the walls. It was installed by Abbott Contracting so that when you’re sitting in the lounge chair you could stare at the beach scene and feel like you were there on the beach.”

In every aspect of the design, the employees’ well-being was clearly well considered. According to the designer, in addition to the other features already mentioned, the new design includes a view of the outside and access to natural light in all work spaces, the addition of a new unisex shower room, staff lockers and an extra coffee bar conveniently located in the midst of the work space. All workstations and offices also feature height-adjustable desktops that allow employees to change their posture from sitting to standing throughout the day to ensure maximum comfort for all employees.

“The feedback has been positive and that the staff is enjoying the lighter, more spacious open feeling of the office,” said Dunstan. “We were able to create the fluid environment that they desired to optimise the company’s agile work ethic and encourage active collaboration among the staff, and everyone seems very happy in the space.”

**Sun Life’s office environment was designed to be flexible and mobile.**



**COMMERCIAL INTERIOR DESIGN WINNER 2015 & 2016**

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**SEAROSE**  
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# PRESENT DAY VINTAGE

Homeowners and designer collaborate to make a new Bermuda home look as if it had been there for generations

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANN SPURLING



Left: Highlights of the open plan living area include an enormous fireplace and weathered ceiling beams. Above: The branched crotch of a casurina tree is used as a pedestal for the island overhang in the kitchen.

It is a rare thing when the perfect team seamlessly joins forces to create a home designed to fulfill the unique vision of a highly creative client through the exceptional detailing provided by those contracted to do so. Searose, a six-bedroom, six-and-a-half-bathroom family home was just such an exception. The overall building design concept was to create a new home with the feel of an historic, old Bermuda cottage (see page 42 for more on the winning building design aspect), and the interiors had to reflect the same.

The owners—a mature, highly-energetic couple with five adult sons and numerous grandchildren—had already engaged the help of cTx Design Group on the architectural side of their home when they began to talk of their numerous interior design concepts with designer Lauren Grayston.

“[The owners] were wonderful to work with and through this journey have become like family,” said Grayston. “[The wife] is a true artist so working with her was always exciting. You never knew what was coming, but you knew it would always be good.

“On a Monday morning I’d check my emails and find pictures of [the husband] propping up a ‘pair’ of pillars covered in mud, different heights and colours and a note from [the wife] saying ‘I’ve found the kitchen fireplace pillars!’ Months later, after we figured out how to have the treasures trucked (sometimes, it seemed, by cart horse) from these obscure locations, we’d huddle around them and figure out how to install them. Turning them around, upside down and a little to the left—no right—and obsess until they were in place.”





Left: Each guest room was designed to be completely unique. This one features painted wood floors. Above: The sink in the powder room features hand-made fish scale tiles by Tabarka.

Grayston remarked that the owners seemed to find inspiration everywhere, but most frequently referenced a great book called *The Swedish Room* by Lars Sjöberg. “She loved the soft palette of blues, greys and whites and nostalgic images which contrasted the rough-hewn furniture against neoclassical backdrops.”

The design team considered each area of the home individually and it evolved over time. And the rules simply did not apply. “[The owners] wanted the house to feel like it had been standing for generations and was filled with clues about the history of the people who lived there. Nothing was to feel ‘new’ or modern—recessed ceiling lights, considered essential to most new builds, were banned; walls were purposely plastered unevenly; at a random point in the new kitchen there is joint running across the floor where the large concrete tiles of the sitting room meet the kitchen’s ¾ inch by ¾ inch white marble mosaic because this was where ‘they had added on the kitchen’ and it was done in a time where they wouldn’t have worried about the floors matching!”

With everything in the design needing to look aged, considerable care and attention was paid to the details—from weathering oversized ceiling beams by leaving them outside in the elements for six months before installation to the careful consideration of placement for the numerous salvage items—both from overseas and their own backyard—

that the couple discovered during the construction process.

“I love junk yards and salvage/wrecking yards and came across the mismatching cement pillars to hold up the fireplace in the kitchen,” said the wife. “Because they’re carved, they soften the massive fireplace that’s lined with old cobble stones.”

“Under the island overhang in the kitchen I wanted something whimsical as a pedestal... I thought of the idea of a branched crotch of a tree. So patiently, Mr. Hocking helped me cut down a good-looking part of a casuarina tree on our property.”

“The puzzled look from the countertop installer was an expected response by that point in the project,” added Grayston.

Other salvaged elements included a pair of round wooden columns with greyed, cracked paint that were used to help give an illusion of privacy between the hallway and the formal living room; and textiles used in the crow’s nest bedroom were discovered at a flea market.



Left: A cedar-lined study was designed exclusively for the husband. Above: The master bath

With a passion for creating her own rules, the wife added unique elements to the design in every room of the house. A grey and white hand-painted checkerboard floor is a highlight in one guest bedroom, while hand-made, fish-scale tiles by Tabarka randomly finished around the sink in the powder room is a standout. And nearly every room in the house features its own unique fireplace—some oversized and grand like the one in the main living/kitchen space and others a little less successful but nonetheless perfect for this unique house. “I had seen an old Swedish fireplace and tried to replicate it with stone,” said the wife. “It totally backfired and ended up looking like a cartoon! It makes everyone laugh when they walk in.”

“With five sons, wives, five grandchildren and more on the way, the house is intended to be a place for the entire family, and the design of each space was considered with the same desire to create something special,” said Grayston. “It was a once-in-a-lifetime kind of project. [The owners were] both fun-loving, creative, warm and caring rebels to work with. Who wouldn’t like that?”

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A guest bathroom features a buttery ceiling.



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